



Key Messages about the Census of Agriculture

www.agcensus.usda.gov

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What is the Census of Agriculture?

- The Census of Agriculture is a complete count, taken every five years, of America's farms and ranches and the people who operate them.
- It is the most complete agricultural data resource available, providing the only source of uniform, comprehensive information for every county in the nation.
- The census provides information on land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, and many other important topics.
- ***The 2007 Census of Agriculture is your voice, your future, your responsibility.***

Agriculture's Voice.

- By participating in the 2007 Census, producers can help show the nation the value and importance of U.S. agriculture.
- This is an opportunity for every producer to show how agriculture contributes to America by providing food, fuel and fiber.
- Each producer has the power to influence key decisions that will shape the direction of American agriculture for years to come, including:
 - Farm Services
 - Production practices and new technologies
 - Policy decisions
 - Transportation & marketing locations

The Future.

- By responding to the Census, every producer can have a positive impact on the future of their own operation and their entire community.
- The Census provides valuable information used for:
 - University research
 - Extension Outreach & Education
 - Community Planning
 - Availability of operational loans and other funding
 - Farm succession planning
 - Location and staffing of USDA service centers
 - Store/company locations
 - Federal & State budget support for agriculture

Everyone's Responsibility.

- Everyone's response to the Census makes a difference!
- To assure we are providing the best tools and reports, we need accurate information from *all* farmers and ranchers – no matter how large or small their operations are.
- This information is used to make a positive difference in local communities.
- Additionally, responses are required *and* protected by law.

What to Do?

- Producers should look for the Census form in their mailboxes in early January.
- Forms must be mailed back or completed online by February 4, 2008.
- Visit www.agcensus.usda.gov for more information.

What to Expect?

By participating in the 2007 Census of Agriculture, producers can expect in return:

- Summary reports in both print and electronic formats once Census data is compiled.
- Information that's a valuable planning tool for their communities and their individual operations.
- Complete confidentiality of individual responses.
- An agricultural voice!

Messages from NASS Pennsylvania Field Office:

- ◆ **Help to Promote the 2007 Census of Agriculture:** To assist you in actively supporting the Census effort, various printed materials, audio and video are available for your use at www.nass.usda.gov/pa/census.
- ◆ **Your Voice:** Economic and political decisions will always be made that affect agriculture. Official statistics allow these decisions to be made with facts instead of guesses and gut feelings.
- ◆ **All Size Farms:** If you keep livestock or poultry or grow plants or crops, we are required to include you in our counts of agricultural places to show the **complete** impact of agriculture in Pennsylvania and in your county. This includes full-time, part-time, small, lifestyle farms and even retired growers that still keep a few animals or grow some plants or crops.
- ◆ **Farm Definition:** In fact the definition of a farm is only \$1,000 worth of livestock, plants, stored grains, or government payments even if there were no sales. As you can see acreage and net income are not considered.
- ◆ **Extension:** Extension relies heavily on official USDA statistics for planning county services to farmers, determining the need for commodity specialists and getting research funds. Their federal budget is partly dependent on the number of farms counted in each county in Pennsylvania.
- ◆ **Government Programs:** Many producers participate in crop insurance or government programs administered by the Farm Service Agency, NRCS, or others. Official Census statistics are extremely important in the development of any farm program and they are often used to administer the program. Farm Bill discussions often use official USDA statistics to understand the impact of proposed legislation.
- ◆ **Pennsylvania is an important agricultural state:** We rank in the top 10 states for many different types of agriculture:
 - Mushrooms, silage corn, tobacco
 - Apples, peaches, pears, grapes, cherries, strawberries
 - Sweet corn, cantaloupes, snap beans, pumpkins
 - Christmas trees, nursery & greenhouse crops, maple syrup
 - Milk, eggs, turkeys, trout, milk goats
 - Pennsylvania is the 3rd largest state for sales of food direct to consumers
- ◆ **Why Small Farms?** Small growers may feel they don't matter much to agriculture in Pennsylvania. **However, taken TOGETHER, these small farms are very important.** Here are some interesting facts about small farms in Pennsylvania that gross less than \$10,000 in sales annually (2002 Census of Agriculture):
 - These small ag places comprise 61% of all 58,000 farms in Pennsylvania.
 - They control 35% of all the land in farms in the state.
 - They sell over \$70 million of agricultural products.
 - They provide nearly 45% of the value of agri-tourism in PA.
 - They control 58% of the land enrolled in Conservation Reserve Program.
 - Over 3,600 or 60% of these operations are operated by a woman.
 - Nearly 13,500 cattle operations average 17 head each.
 - 1850 hog operations average 21 head each.
 - Nearly 2600 sheep operations average 24 head each.
 - Over 800 goat operations average 12 head each.
 - Over 11,600 horse operations average 6 head each.
 - Over 5,300 growers harvested grain corn from nearly 68,000 acres.
 - Over 19,000 places control over a half million acres of hay land in PA.
 - Over 2100 places control over 5,600 acres of fruit and vegetables.
 - About 560 growers sell nearly a million dollars of cut Christmas trees.
 - About 5,000 places receive over \$7.7 million in government payments averaging around \$1,500 each.